

## **Servant Leadership**

In the New Testament scriptures in the Gospel of John we read several times this statement by Jesus, “My sheep hear my voice and I call them by name.” The point is being made here that a reciprocal relationship exists between the shepherd and the sheep. The shepherd knows the sheep and the sheep know the shepherds voice and willingly follow.

This is important with regard to our understanding of leadership. How shepherds function in the West is significantly different than shepherds in the East. Shepherds in the west drive their sheep. Shepherds in the east lead their sheep. The story is told of a tour group being escorted through a country in the east. The tour guide was describing this vary difference in the way shepherds function in the east and west when one of the participants pointing outside the bus said, “That man over there is driving his sheep instead of leading them. That is not what you described about shepherds here.” The tour guide asked the bus driver to stop while he went over to talk to the shepherd. He came back to the bus with a smile and said, “He isn’t the shepherd, he is the butcher!”

Our leadership will either be from the front or the rear. When it is from the front, you can expect others to follow and the leader will often have a respect from his followers that exceeds his real ability. People like servant leadership. Especially when the person leading is doing things which serve those following them. Leaders who drive others before them often lack the respect of their followers because they sacrifice others for their own safety or comfort. Perhaps the appropriate question is, “Are you a shepherd who leads or a butcher who drives.”